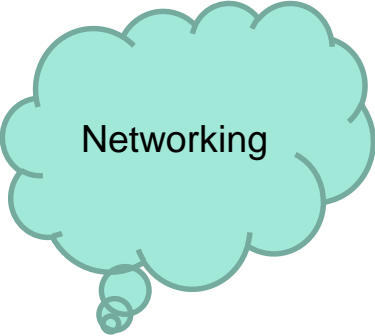

Abstract to Manuscript: Publishing Predictors of Abstracts Presented at the Medical Library Association Conferences

— Rachel Hinrichs, Mirian Ramirez &
Mahasin Ameen —

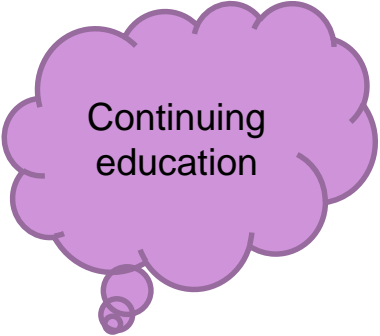
Background – Why attend conferences?




Networking




Keeping up
with trends



Continuing
education

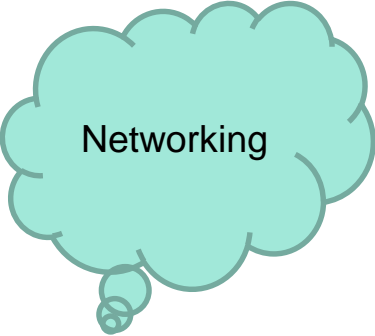


‘Professional
rejuvenation’




Knowledge
sharing


Background – Why attend conferences?



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**Frequently cited by conference
planners as the primary
objective of the conference**

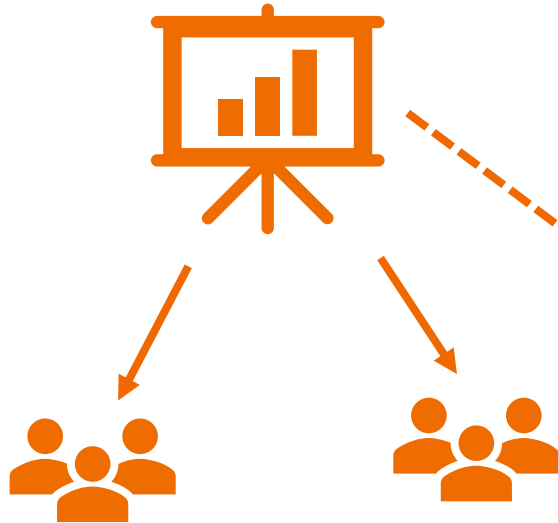
Neves, *Health Research
Policy and Systems*, 2012



Knowledge
sharing

Background – Conference presentation to journal article

Conference presentation



Formal and informal knowledge sharing plays a significant role in the translation of evidence from research to practice.

Conference presentations are not as rigorously peer-reviewed as journal articles, and do not necessarily enable the full dissemination of details.

Journal article



Background – Conference presentation to journal article

Conference presentation



Background – Conference Publication Rates

According a scoping review, the publication rate of conference abstracts is the most utilized indicator of success by conference planners.

- [*Neves, Health Research Policy and Systems, 2012*](#)

Conference	Year(s)	Publication Rate
Biomedical conferences ($n=425$) from a Cochrane review		37%
Association of College and Research Libraries	2009	13%
Medical Library Association	2002-2003	28%
Canadian Health Libraries Association	2004-2009	32%

Background – Barriers to publication

- Time is the most frequently reported reason
- Lack of resources
- Publication not a goal
- Low priority
- Trouble with co-authors
- Lack of research confidence
- Organizational structure doesn't incentivize publications

Differences in who publishes and what gets published can result in publication bias and limit whose voices are heard.

Scherer, 2018; Lessick, 2016; Hoffmann, 2017

Research Questions

- 1) Which **features** of a conference abstract and author influence the likelihood of **future publication** as a journal article?
- 2) How does the **publication rate** of MLA conference abstracts in 2012 and 2014 **compare** to the publication rate in 2002 and 2003, as published in a previous study?

*Harvey & Wandersee study, *JMLA*, 2010

Methods – Abstract Eligibility

Inclusion Criteria

- Presented at the 2012 or 2014 MLA conferences
- Poster or presentation

Exclusion Criteria

- Lightning talks, tech trends
- Invited presentations
- Missing author name(s) or abstract

Included *n*=628 abstracts

Methods – Determining publication

Two approaches to determining publication rate:

- Search



- Survey of first authors
 - Asked whether abstract(s) were published and where
 - Author credentials at the time of presentation

Methods – Data Extraction

- 7 librarians at IUPUI volunteered to read and code abstracts using Qualtrics form
 - 2 norming sessions
- 1 – 2 reviewers read and extracted data from each abstract
 - Disagreements between the 2 reviewers were reached by consensus discussion (about 20% of abstracts had disagreements primarily about the research status and/or research methods)
 - 28% ended up only reviewed by 1 reviewer due to time constraints

Methods – Data Analysis

Potential Predictors of Publication as a Journal Article

- AHIP credential of first author
- First author's highest credential
- Format (poster/presentation)
- International (non-USA) co-author(s)
- Multi/single institutional
- Non-librarian co-author
- Research status
 - Research method
- Work setting

Binary logistic regression

Publication Rate Comparison

- Harvey & Wandersee 2010 study publication rate compared to our study

Chi-square test

Fewer abstracts from 2012 and 2014 were later published as journal articles.

28% published



122 / 422 abstracts

22% published

137 / 628 abstracts

Why would the publication rate decrease?

- Increase in the number of abstracts that tend to not be published
- There was not a proportional increase in the number of authors willing to publish
 - Number of published articles in each study was close: 122 vs. 137
- Scholarly journals' acceptance rates are more stringent
 - Or there are not more 'slots' to publish

Which factors predict the likelihood of future publication?

- AHIP Credential
- First Author's Credentials
- Format
(poster/presentation)
- International (non-USA)
Author(s)
- Multi/single institutional
- Non-Librarian Co-author
- Research Method
- Work Setting

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- Research Status/Method
- Work Setting

Which factors predict the likelihood of future publication?



1.7x more likely to be
published than..



Multi-institutional abstracts

n=35 (28.2%) were published.

Single-institutional abstracts

n=87 (18.2%) were published.

Which factors predict the likelihood of future publication?



1.7x more likely to be published than..



Multi-institutional abstracts

$n=35$ (28.2%) were published.

Single-institutional abstracts

$n=87$ (18.2%) were published.

Why?

- Implies a larger, “news-worthy” project
- More generalizable
- This is a common finding -- many other conference abstract studies have found this same result.

Which factors predict the likelihood of future publication?



Research abstracts
n=51 (29.8%) were published.

2x more likely to be
published than..



Non-research (program)
abstracts
n=71 (16.5%) were published.

Which factors predict the likelihood of future publication?



Research abstracts
n=51 (29.8%) were published.

2x more likely to be
published than..



Non-research (program)
abstracts
n=71 (16.5%) were published.

In particular, **mixed methods** (4.9x) and **surveys** (2.3x) were more likely to be published.

Why?

- Easier to translate to a journal article
- May have been done with publication in mind
- Considered worth the time and effort to write-up

Is the publication rate of abstracts a good indicator of success for library conferences?

- Practice-based vs. academic research conferences
 - Practice-based conferences may have different types of content
 - Scherer, *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 2018 → primary biomedical research
 - Neves, *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 2012 → primarily academic
- Librarians may consider their conference presentation as the “final product” or, similarly, they may not consider a peer-reviewed article as their “primary desired research output”
 - Fennewald 2002; Hoffmann 2017; Drott 1995
- Librarians may choose to share their work in other ways

How can we better disseminate non-research? (e.g., successful programs, best practices, technical content)

- Write shorter, practice-focused articles for *MLA Connect* or other newsletters
- Deposit posters and slides in repositories
- MLA could reward program abstracts similar to what we do for research abstracts

How do we help more research abstracts move to full publication?

- Improve librarians' research confidence
- Encourage multi-institutional projects
- Journal editors and the Research Caucus could take a more hands-on approach to encourage presenters to publish, and mentor them through the process
 - “Real-time peer review” (Eldredge, 2013)

Wrap-Up

- Multi-institutional and research abstracts are the most likely to be published as journal articles.
- Publication rate may not be the best indicator of success for LIS conferences.
- We need to find better ways to disseminate non-research/program abstracts, which are valuable to practitioners.
- Hands-on approaches may be needed to encourage more authors of research abstracts to publish their findings.

Acknowledgements

A big thank you to Randall Halverson, Caitlin Pike, Sean Stone, Julia Stumpff, Sally Gore, Susan Lessick, Kate Corcoran, and George Eckert.

This project was part of MLA's Research Training Institute.